

March 26th 2009

TO: Members of the Judiciary Committee

RE: Support for Senate Bill 1157, An Act Concerning Funding for Legal Services

My name is Angela Brown and I am writing to testify on why New Haven and Connecticut as a whole needs to have more funding for Legal Aid Services. As it stands currently, Legal Aid is actively working with all of the residents of W.T Rowe towers. Which is mostly made up of elderly/ disabled low income tenants. We are in the process of negotiating with a private financial company for a rebuild of our building. Legal Aid has worked with us every step of the way, making sure we are all aware of our rights, and has helped our community tremendously. They have also worked with some of the residents that felt they were being unfairly evicted from their homes. It is my belief that without the help they have provided us we would have ended up signing into agreements that held no legal ground on our behalves.

I also have had some very personal issues that I brought to Legal Aid some years ago. I was a victim of some very serious Domestic Violence. I had found my way out of it, but the person involved broke into my home and assaulted me. Breaking many bones in my body and not to mention my spirit. I found myself in the middle of a legal battle I was not equipped to handle on my own. I had not only lost interest in fighting for my life but I also lost my ability to believe in people. I was told by a friend to contact Legal Aid and promised they would do all they could to help me. So I did so, and was pleasantly surprised at the treatment I received. Not only were they very concerned for my safety but they also showed what seemed to me to be a genuine concern for my welfare. They walked me through everything step by step. Giving me invaluable information that would eventually end up saving my life. Just that alone helped me to believe that there was still good people in the world. I am explaining this story to you in hopes that you will see they do so much more then just represent people as lawyers. They also give them hope and strength. Funding for Legal Aid is imperative, it is something that all of Connecticut needs more of.

Thank you,
Miss Angela Brown
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